

Letter from Gilbert Grosvenor to Merian C. Cooper, December 8, 1936

P Alec Graham Bell COPY December 8, 1936 Mr. Merian C. Cooper, Selznick International Pictures, Inc., 9336 Washington Boulevard, Culver City, California Dear Mr. Cooper:

Replying to your inquiry of October 28, Mrs. Grosvenor would be entirely sympathetic toward a dramatization of the life of her father, Alexander Graham Bell, following the general lines of the biography by Catherine Mackenzie.

She wishes me to state that in several radio presentations of incidents in the life of Alexander Graham Bell, Mr. Bell has been represented at times as uncouth and once as a rough spoken inventor, which is of course contrary to fact. The Bell family for generations had specialized in good speech and good elocution. From his earliest boyhood, Alexander Graham Bell had been taught to speak without "brogue" and to use excellent diction, his father and grandfather being teachers of elocution whose pupils came from all parts of Great Britain and included ministers and actors.

It is true that Dr. Bell was born in Scotland and was of Scot ancestry, but he always maintained that the educated Scot carefully avoided the accents that are usually associated with Scots, just as a cultured Englishman avoids the cockney accent of London.

Alexander Melville Bell, father of Alexander Graham Bell, always maintained and proved that a person truly educated in English speech would avoid the peculiar drawls that are associated with Southerners in the United States and also the nasal accents of the Yankee. In other words, no one could tell from Mr. Bell's speech from what section of the English speaking world he came.

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Please pardon my delay in answering your letter. I am glad to hear from you. Kindest regards.

Sincerely yours, (signed) GILBERT GROSVENOR

COPY SELZNICK INTERNATIONAL PICTURES, INC 9336 Washington Boulevard
Culver City, Calif. December 5, 1936 Mr. Gilbert Grosvenor National Geographic Society
Washington, D. C. Dear Mr. Grosvenor:

I am attaching copy of a letter which Mr. Merian C. Cooper dispatched to you on October 28, and to which we have not received a reply.

It was his thought that perhaps it had gone astray and you might not have received it.

He would be very happy to have your reaction to this letter when you have reached a decision.

Very truly yours, KATHERINE POTTER Secretary to Merian C. Cooper

c o p y October 28, 1936 Mr. Gilbert Grosvenor National Geographic Society Washington,
D. C. Dear Mr. Grosvenor:

A friend of mine, Mr. Glendon Allvine, has been reading the biography of Alexander Graham Bell, by Katharine MacKenzie, and is impressed with the possibilities it suggests for an interesting and important motion picture.

Mr. Allvine wishes to know whether you and Mrs. Grosvenor would be sympathetic toward a dramatization following the general lines of the biography, covering the period up through the demonstration of the telephone at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition. Mr. Allvine is a fine producer and worked for me at one time.

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If you are interested in the project, and will let me know, I shall ask him to give you detailed information as to its possibilities.

With kind regards,

Very truly yours, MCC kp Merian C. Cooper.